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Testdriving CD-ROM's-The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia ver. 2.0

Norman Desmarais

Providence College, normd@providence.edu

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From the Reference Desk
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ences and Technology and Invention. So, unlike *Magill's Survey of Science*, in which each science is treated to its own multi-volume set, all of the sciences are covered in each volume. Each chapter heading contains articles on specific discoveries, biographical sketches and a bibliography of primary sources. The essays that cover the scientific discoveries range from 1500-2000 words. The biographical sketches of the scientists are shorter at 500-1000 words each. Approximately 160 scientific discoveries or developments are covered in each volume. Each essay consists of an overview, background and a discussion of impacts. In *Volume 5 1800-1899* they range from the discovery of the magnetic North Pole to the development of Boolean algebra, from the discovery of viruses to the invention of the sewing machine and from the birth of dentistry to the first subways. *Volume 7 1950 - Present* takes the reader from invention of the heart and lung machine, through the space race and the Cold war on to the Human Genome Project, Chaos Theory, the personal computer and the explosion of fiber optics in communications technology.

The writing is direct and uncluttered by jargon. Presentation is good with photos, illustrations and sidebars complementing the text. Unfortunately, the inexpensive binding may not hold up to intense use. But, in spite of this, and the confusing publishing schedule, *Science and its Times* obviously merits consideration. It will be a helpful addition to high school and public libraries, as well as some undergraduate libraries where the history of science is a recurring interest.

With the political season heating up it is only fitting that we take a look at two of Sharpe Reference's recent additions. The *Encyclopedia of Interest Groups and Lobbyists in the United States* (2000, 076568022X, \$185) gives the reader a real perspective on the central role that interest groups and their representatives play in the political process. The coverage is diverse. A total of 197 interest groups are listed in categories like banking and finance, health and medical, labor, civil and human rights, agriculture, industry, construction and transport and media, entertainment and information. There are also sections on

single-issue interest groups and foreign governments who promote their political agendas. Each category is preceded by an essay that gives a useful overview while the individual entries discuss the history, activities and financial facts related to the specific interest group covered, as well as providing a brief bibliography. The information is both interesting and helpful while the writing is factual and objective. However, the bibliographies could be a lot stronger. They range from the one entry listings (both organizational Web sites) for Friends of the Earth and the Environmental Defense Fund to those with up to ten entries like the Nuclear Energy Institute. (The NRA has only three references listed.) But the set has added strengths. There is a section of statistical information provided in a number of tables and charts about the top PAC's and lobbyists, as well as complete contact information for each organization. There is also a helpful index, a table-of-contents and a list of the abbreviations and acronyms used in the set.

Overall, the *Encyclopedia of Interest Groups and Lobbyists in the United States* brings together a good deal of important and

useful information. Both undergraduate and public libraries will find it a beneficial addition to their collections.

Another Sharpe reference which brings together a lot of information is the *Encyclopedia of Third Parties in America* (2000, 0765680203, \$275). The eclectic diversity of American politics shines through the pages of this set. The *Encyclopedia's* three volumes are divided into four parts. The first is a collection of eight essays that set the historical context, in broad chronological order, for the rise of third parties. The second is a group of 40 color maps that reflect the presidential voting percentages of major third party movements. The third part contains the actual articles on the individual parties. These articles provide informative discussions of the origins, platforms, electoral results and the legacies of each party. Coverage is impressive and ranges from the anti-immigrant Know-Nothings to the abolitionist led

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TestDriving CD-ROMs — Reviews of CD-ROM Products



The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia

Column Editor: **Norman Desmarais** (Acquisitions Librarian, Phillips Memorial Library, Providence College, Providence, RI 02918; ph: 401-865-2241; fax: 401-865-2823)
<normd@providence.edu> <http://www.providence.edu/pml/pmlhpl.htm>

The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia ver. 2.0

Facts on File, Inc., 11 Penn Plaza, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10001-2006
tel.: 800-322-8755, fax: 800-678-3633, <http://www.factsonfile.com>

ISBN: 0-8160-3607-1 (Windows single user), 0-8160-3609-8 (Windows network)

0-8160-3608-X (Macintosh single user), 0-8160-3610-1 (Macintosh network)

Price: \$149.95 (single user), \$499.95 (5-user network) System Requirements: DOS: MS-DOS 5.0 or later, 640 KB RAM, 2 MB free hard drive space, color monitor, printer, double speed CD-ROM drive. Windows: 386-16 or better, Windows 3.1 or later, 8 MB RAM, 2 MB free hard drive space, color monitor, mouse, printer, double speed CD-ROM drive, Windows compatible sound card. Macintosh: 68030 CPU or better, System 7.1 or later, 4 MB RAM, 1.3 MB free hard drive space, 13-inch 256 color monitor, printer, double speed CD-ROM drive.

Reviewed by **Norman Desmarais** (Providence College)
<normd@providence.edu>

The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia ver. 2.0 is a hybrid CD-ROM for DOS, Windows, and Macintosh. It comprises the text and maps from six Facts on File titles: *Voices of the Winds: Native American Legends* (1989 and now out of print), *Who Was Who in Native American History: Indians and Non-Indians from Early Contacts Through 1900* (1990),

World Dance: the Language of Native American Culture (1994), *Encyclopedia of Native American Tribes* (1990), *Atlas of the North American Indian*, and *Encyclopedia of Native American Religions* (1992). The last three titles have had revised print editions appear in late 1999/early 2000. A Web version of *The American*

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can Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia should appear by mid-2000. We expect that it will include the revised versions of the source titles. The titles of the CD and the corresponding print publications focus primarily on North American Indians; but they also cover Mexico, Canada, the Arctic, Meso-American civilizations, Caribbean and South American tribes.

The main menu offers buttons to locate information by tribes, history, folklore, religion, biographies, reference shelf, and multimedia gallery. The Tribes button allows locating information about specific tribes by name or by region. Regions include: arctic, subarctic, northwest, southwest, Plains, Great Basin, California, northeast, southeast, Plateau, all regions, and other areas.

The History button goes to a submenu that offers other buttons to focus on early civilizations, culture and customs, wars and rebellions, land disputes, and discovery/exploration. These subdivisions are also used by the history and exploration timelines in Reference Shelf.

The Folklore, Religion, and Biographies buttons offer two further buttons which are complementary. One allows searching topics alphabetically while the other organizes the topics by tribe. The alphabetic entries are usually shorter (one or two paragraphs) than the topics. Alphabetic buttons appear raised except when there is no corresponding information. The multimedia gallery allows perusal of entries by media type: audio, video, photos/portraits, or maps.

The Reference Shelf includes primary source documents, a glossary, timelines for both history and exploration (but there are no links to corresponding topics), and a list of museums and societies. The buttons of the secondary menus for the multimedia gallery and the reference shelf transliterated the labels into Greek characters. Museums and societies can be identified by location or organization name for both the United States and Canada. It is up-to-date, including information about the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in Ledyard, CT, which opened in late 1998. Searchers can identify documents related to particular tribes or the people related to them. As many of the documents consist of treaties, a button lists the treaty names and the dates.

Trying to locate the Pequots (or Pequot) and the Ojibwa with the Tribe button, however, made us think that there was no coverage of these tribes. Using the Search button at the bottom of almost every screen produced 125 entries for the Pequots, including a lengthy article on the Pequot War, and 147 for the Ojibwa. This search feature has some interesting capabilities. As one types letters in the Search For window, the Words Available window goes to the nearest match. This helps to identify variant spellings such as Mohican, Mohegan, and

Mahican. The entry for Algonkin explains:

— Indian tribal names can be confusing. Alternate names or different spellings of the same name are often used. Sometimes the Indians themselves use different names for their tribes than those given by whites. Or tribes may be known by names given to them by another tribe. Moreover, early historians may have applied names inconsistently. There were often French versions from French-speaking historians, explorers or traders, as well as English versions. In the case of the southern and southwestern Indians who lived in territories where the Spanish settled in North America, there were sometimes varying Spanish names as well.

— The use of the name Algonquian or Algonquin or Algonkin is an example of possible confusion. Different writers use different spellings. To add to the mix-up, the name is sometimes used to discuss one small Canadian tribe, the people who originally held the name. But at other times it is used to denote many different tribes who spoke a common language but who were spread all over the Northeast and other areas as well. One might see the phrase the Algonquian proper to distinguish the original tribe from other Algonquian-speaking peoples. Another way is to use the Algonkin spelling for the original tribe and to use the Algonquian spelling for the whole language family of tribes.

As the search engine identifies the closest entry, it lists the word in the Results window along with the total number of occurrences. Double clicking a word from the Words Available window enters the term in the Search For window; but it does not replace what one typed. We sometimes experienced General Protection Fault errors doing this. The Operators window offers an impressive number of options: &, ^, |, ~, \and, \not, \or, \xor, :1, {, }, *, ***, and #. Searchers will understand the meaning of some of these operators but probably not all of them. Yet, the ondisc help does not explain their meaning and the documentation that comes in the cover of the jewel case only covers the installation process.

The Tools button on the navigation bar allows saving pictures and text, viewing search history, creating or running tours (slide shows or presentations), adding topics to a tour, and saving a tour. There is no cut and paste option; so, when one saves text to disk, one copies the entire article and must then select the desired portions.

The entries offer a good introduction or overview to a topic, as an encyclopedia should. However, despite its breadth of coverage, *The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia* is not a one-stop solution for serious research. For example, the long article on Indians in the American Revolution glosses over the Battle of Bennington (VT) without mentioning the important role of the Indians. Nor does the article mention the massacre of 20-year-old Jane McRea that galvanized the colonials and resulted in a great increase in recruits, sealing the fate of Gen. Burgoyne and leading to his surrender at Saratoga. However, a four paragraph biogra-

Newton
did his research
sitting under a tree.

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And IDEAL emails free digests of
just-published journals and tables of contents in advance of journal-print dates
(www.academicpress.com/ideal-alert)



phy of John Burgoyne devotes an entire paragraph to the incident; and there is a biographical entry under the variant spelling Jane MacCrea.

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Book Reviews — Noteworthy Compositions

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston)
<vaughnd@cofc.edu>

In this issue, a veritable cornucopia of books is presented for your thoughtful consideration. I would like to introduce and thank the College of Charleston's **Phillip Powell** for enlightening us with his review of *Strangers at Home and Abroad: Recollections of Austrian Jews Who Escaped Hitler*, edited by **Adi Wimmer**. Phillip is a reference librarian and the Bibliographic Instruction Coordinator. While this is his first (but not certainly not his last) review for *ATG*, he has also written reviews for *American Reference Books Annual*. Welcome to the Grain, Phillip!

Robots for Kids: Exploring New Technologies for Learning
Edited by **Alison Druin** and **James Hendler**
(2000, Morgan Kaufmann Publishers,
1558605975, 377 pp, \$44.95)

If you have recently watched MTV's *Real World New Orleans*, you might be familiar with the house dog. For those of you who have not given up a Tuesday evening at the ten spot for the sake of witnessing popular culture, what you have been missing is a robotic canine. Most of the *Real World* casts are given fish; the *New Orleans* crew was given a hunk of wires and metal named Shorty. Being slightly skeptical of the usefulness of a robotic dog, I jumped at the chance to read editors **Alison Druin** and **James Hendler**'s *Robots for Kids: Exploring New Technologies for Learning*.

Many of the books I review address one of the many issues associated with technology; *Robots for Kids* is no exception. Arguably the new technological frontier, robots are no longer funny little humanoids that used to make us laugh on television shows like *Silver Spoons* and *Saved by the Bell*. Rather, robots and other forms of artificial intelligence (AI) are used not only as toys and pets but also as assistants to the disabled and as educational tools. *Robots for Kids* is certain to introduce you to new frontiers in mechanical technology.

Druin and Hendler are no strangers to robotics. Druin, an assistant professor at the **University of Maryland** in both the **Institute for Advanced Computer Studies** and the **College of Education**, has focused her recent research on robotic storytelling technologies. Hendler, also a professor at the University of Maryland, heads the **Autonomous Mobile Robotics Laboratory** and the **Advanced Information Technology Laboratory**.

Robots for Kids covers three central topics: robot technologies for children, robots in education, and future visions for robotics. It is in the first section that **ABIO**, Sony's four-legged autonomous friend, is discussed. These entertainment robots, like the *Real World*'s Shorty, have five modes of enjoyment: watching (It's so cute!), interacting (through gestures and vocal stimulation), raising (much like a child), controlling (as in playing a game with the robot), and developing (creating your own robot). *Robots for Kids* thoroughly explores the ingredients needed for creating a pet-type robot, the design opportunities and limitations, and the implementation of these robots into real-life situations. Pet-type robots are not the only mechanical issue explored, however; Druin and Hendler also highlight **PETS (Personal Electronic Tellers of Stories)**, the **LEGO Intelligent House**, the **KISS Institute**, girls and technology, and several other themes. Kid's View sections essays by children that describe personal experiences with robotics are also included.

Robots for Kids begins with an exceptional table of contents that allows the reader to easily and quickly flip to chapters and sections of interest. Diagrams of robot construction, tables and graphs representing case study findings, black and white photographs, and color plates are also included. In short, this interesting book offers a bundle of information on a topic that is rarely explored in such depth. If your academic library supports programs in educational or instructional technology, engineering, artificial intelligence, and/or human-computer interaction, *Robots for Kids* would be a beneficial addition to your collection.

PC Buyers Handbook 2000
by **Gordon P. Foreman**
(2000, McFarland, 078640907x, 127 pp, \$22.50)

The month of September conjures up memories of buying new pencils, searching for the coolest notebook for English class, shopping for back-to-school clothing, and hoping to figure out exactly what your new teachers expect from you. It is not surprising that many students—from kindergarten to college—are expected to have access to a computer. If you are shopping for a new Mac or Windows machine, be sure to reference **Gordon P. Foreman's PC Buyer's Handbook 2000**. Right away you might be thinking that it is useless to buy a book about computers when the information in it is obsolete

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The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia is a very good product that combines several reference sources and makes searching for information easy and enjoyable. Topics not identifiable from the main access points can usually be retrieved with the search function. We could not identify a single topic about which we could not locate at least some information. Many of the entries contain printed pronunciation information, particularly for tribal names. A multimedia encyclopedia should replace these notes with an authoritative audio pronunciation. 🌿

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Liberty party, the Nationalist Socialist White People's Party to the Black Panthers and the National Women's Party to the Chicano La Raza Unida Party. The fourth part of the encyclopedia consists of biographies of the main actors associated with the parties discussed. Included are more familiar names like Jane Addams, Robert LaFollette, and H. Ross Perot, as well as the more obscure like Lucy Parsons, Nathaniel Banks and Vito Marcantonio. The set also includes biographies and a glossary of terms.

Besides giving specific information about the parties discussed, this *Encyclopedia* reveals both the difficulties faced by third parties in the American political system and the significant impacts these parties had on the mainstream. Most of the parties included in this encyclopedia were blips on the political radar screen. The fact they existed at all, is testament to political vitality and independent thought. Reading through this work makes this crystal clear. Academic, public and some high school libraries will find the *Encyclopedia of Third Parties in America* a worthwhile and useful purchase. 🌿